

Schomburgk ascertained that the important species of this region is *Strychnos toxifera*, Schomb., accompanied by *S. Schomburgkii*, Klotsch, and *S. cogens*, Benth.

2. The very extensive region of the Upper Amazons, giving the curare of the Pebas Indians, the Javari, the Yapura, &c. The plant forming the basis of this curare was found during the expedition of M. de Castelnau, and described by Weddell under the name of *S. Castelnauana*. It is usually associated with a menispermaceous plant, probably the *Abuta*; it is the *Cocculus toxicoferus*, Wedd. MM. Jobert and Crévaux have recently brought home these species, and confirmed the statements of M. Weddell.

3. The region of the Rio Negro. The roots, stems, and leaves of the important species of this region were communicated to the author during the Exposition of 1878; and he has described them in the 'Journal de Thérapeutique.' The venation of the leaves and the structure of the stem and roots prove this plant to be a *Strychnos* which does not answer to any known species; and for it the author has proposed the name of *S. Gubleri*.

4. Upper French Guiana, furnishing the curare of the Roucouyenne and Trios Indians. The important species of this region is a plant indicated by the author in a communication to the Academy of Sciences on December 22, 1879. It is the most interesting of the two new species of *Strychnos* brought back by M. Crévaux from his recent explorations; and the author here describes it under the name of *Strychnos Crévauxii*. On the banks of the river Parou, an affluent of the Lower Amazons, it bears the name of *ourari* or *urari*; but it is perfectly distinct from the plants so designated in other regions.—*Comptes Rendus*, Jan. 19, 1880, p. 133.

On the Systematic Position of the Sponges.

By DR. CONRAD KELLER.

At the Meeting of the Société Helvétique des Sciences Naturelles in August last, Dr. Conrad Keller communicated some observations upon the systematic position of the sponges, which he regarded as forming a third natural division (Spongozoa) of the Cœlenterata. He stated that in the spring of 1879 he had the opportunity at Naples of thoroughly observing the development of a new siliceous sponge, which he names *Chalinula fertilis*. In this species he ascertained that the sexes are separate, and that, during the period of reproduction, the female actually presents a nuptial dress, which varies from carmine-red to lilac. The ovum undergoes a complete but irregular segmentation, which results in the formation of a larva consisting first of two and afterwards of three lamellæ. The transformation of this into a young sponge could be traced with certainty; it gave origin to a form which, with the exception of the tentacles, agrees in all essential points with a young polype. Dr. Keller exhibited drawings illustrative of the details of these transformations, which he regarded as leaving no doubt that the true position of the sponges is among Cœlenterata.—*Bibl. Univ., Arch. des Sci.* December 15, 1879, p. 713.